

## Message Text

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62  
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 EB-07 PRS-01

( ISO ) W  
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O R 262200Z JAN 75  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9673  
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 580

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, OAS, AR, US  
SUBJ: MAILLIARD STATEMENT BOGOTA ON CHANGE OF SITE OF  
BA MFM

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS FROM  
AMBASSADOR HILL

DEPT. PASS OTHER ARA POSTS AS NECESSARY

1. MINISTER NATALE, FOREIGN MINISTER VIGNES' PRIVATE  
SECRETARY, CALLED ME AT 10:00 A.M. ON SUNDAY (JAN 26)  
TO SAY THAT FONMIN VIGNES WANTED ME TO COME TO HIS OFFICE  
AT NOON TO DISCUSS AN URGENT MATTER.

2. WHEN I ARRIVED, I WAS RECEIVED BY THE FONMIN, AMB.  
ORFILA AND AMB. QUIJANO (BOTH CALLED IN FOR CONSULTATIONS).  
AFTER NO PLEASANTRIES, VIGNES DIRECTLY GOT TO THE MATTER  
THAT ANGERED HIM. THE MORNING EDITION OF LA NACION (JAN 26)  
CARRIED A BOGOTA DATEDLINE STORY BY REUTERS QUOTING AMB.  
MAILLIARD AS SAYING THAT IF VENEZUELA AND ECUADOR MAIN-  
TAINED THEIR PRESENT POSITIONS, THE "NEW DIALOGUE WOULD  
HAVE TO BE SUSPENDED UNTIL A NEW LOCATION COULD BE FOUND  
TO HOLD IT." IN THE NEXT PARAGRAPH, MAILLIARD WAS

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AGAIN QUOTED SAYING: "IF VENEZUELA, ECUADOR AND SOME  
OTHERS CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN THEIR ATTITUDE OF NOT ATTENDING  
THE BA MFM BECAUSE OF THE TRADE BILL, ARGENTINA SHOULD

RECONSIDER ITS POSITION OF BEING HOST TO THE MFM."

3. VIGNES SAID THAT ONE QUOTE IN THE ARTICLE MIGHT BE A NEWSMAN'S ERROR, BUT SINCE MAILLIARD WAS TWICE QUOTED SAYING ARGENTINA SHOULD NOT BE SITE OF MFM, HE BELIEVED MAILLIARD HAD MADE THE STATEMENTS. THE STATEMENTS WERE "PERSONALLY VERY UPSETTING, UNCALLED FOR AND DAMAGING TO OUR RELATIONS". HE ADDED THAT HE WAS "COMPELLED TO DEMAND THAT THEY BE RETRACTED AT ONCE".

4. I ASSURED THE MINISTER THAT THE MAILLIARD QUOTES WENT COUNTER TO EVERY COMMUNICATION I HAD RECEIVED ON THE SUBJECT, AND COULD NOT CONCEIVE OF THE STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO MAILLIARD, IF HE HAD BEEN ACCURATELY QUOTED, AS BEING OFFICIAL ONES. I ADDED, THAT I WOULD UPON LEAVING THE MINISTER'S OFFICE, CALL WASHINGTON AND SEE TO IT THAT THIS MATTER WAS CORRECTED. I ADDED THAT IF AMB. MAILLIARD HAD, INDEED, MADE THESE STATEMENTS, I WOULD URGE THE DEPARTMENT TO ISSUE A RETRACTION ON MONDAY, JAN. 27 AT NOON BRIEFING.

5. VIGNES SAID ONLY A STRONG AND CATEGORICAL DENIAL BY THE DEPARTMENT COULD REPAIR THE DAMAGE DONE. HE DID NOT REPEAT NOT WANT A DENIAL BY MAILLIARD--THAT WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH TO RIGHT THE SITUATION. OBVIOUSLY UPSET BY THE STATEMENTS, VIGNES WENT ON TO SAY THAT NOT ONLY DID THEY COMPLI- CATE AN ALREADY VERY DELICATE DIPLOMATIC SITUATION, BUT THEY APPEARED "CALCULATED" TO PROVOKE A HOSTILE RESPONSE FROM THE ARGENTINE PUBLIC TOWARD THE U.S. HE RECALLED TO ME HOW PRUDENT HE HAD BEEN IN HANDLING THE PRESS, NOT ONLY DELICATE MULTILATERAL QUESTIONS BUT BILATERAL ONES AS WELL. WE HAD SOUGHT AND HAD RECEIVED COOPERATION FROM EACH OTHER TO THIS POINT BUT HE WOULD BE COMPELLED TO REACT IN "VERY STRONG TERMS" TO THE MAILLIARD STATEMENT. IN ANY PRESS STATEMENT HE WOULD MAKE, AND THE ARGENTINE PRESS WOULD DEMAND AN EXPLANATION, HE WOULD IN THE STRONGEST TERMS SAY THAT A CHANGE OF SITE HAD NOT ONLY NOT BEEN DISCUSSED BUT THAT IT HAD NEVER EVEN OCCURRED TO ANYONE-ONLY ARGENTINA HAD ANY LICENSE TO RAISE SUCH A TOPIC. HE DEMANDED THE DEPARTMENT  
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TAKE THE SAME LINE. I SAID I WOULD ALSO PRESS THESE POINTS IN MY COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE DEPARTMENT.

6. AT THIS POINT, VIGNES' PRIVATE SECRETARY INTERRUPTED TO SAY THAT THE COLOMBIAN FONMIN WAS ON THE PHONE, AND HE EXCUSED HIMSELF TO TAKE THE CALL IN ANOTHER ROOM. WHILE HE WAS GONE, AMB. QUIJANO SAID TO ME THAT SINCE HE AND AMB. ORFILA HAD ARRIVED IN BUENOS AIRES ON SATURDAY, THEY HAD BEEN REVIEWING THE PROSPECTS AND TIMING FOR THE MFM AND SECRETARY KISSINGER'S FEBRUARY VISIT TO ARGENTINA. VIGNES HAD BEEN PERSONNALLY CONSULTING WITH OTHER LATIN FOREIGN MINISTERS WITH RESPECT

TO THE MFM TIMING ISSUE. HE ADDED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD DOUBTLESS HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY TO US ON THE SUBJECT VERY SHORTLY, IMPLYING THAT A POSTPONEMENT OF MARCH MFM WAS LIKELY.

7. UPON HIS RETURN TO HIS OFFICE, VIGNES SAID BEFORE GOING FURTHER HE WAS VERY PLEASED BY THE CONVERSATION HE HAD JUST HAD WITH THE COLOMBIAN FONMIN AND WISHED TO TELL ME ABOUT IT. THE COLOMBIANS, HE SAID, HAD EXPRESSED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO LEAVE THE ENTIRE MATTER OF MFM TIMING IN VIGNES' HANDS. ADDING THAT IF HE WISHED TO POSTPONE THE MEETING, THEY WOULD SUPPORT HIM BUT WOULD EQUALLY SUPPORT HIM IF HE WERE TO INSIST ON THE PRESENT SCHEDULE. THE COLOMBIANS ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES DID THEY BELIEVE THE SITE OF THE MFM SHOULD BE CHANGED. VIGNES THEN SAID THAT THE FONMIN HAD TOLD HIM THAT THE MAILLIARD STATEMENT, WHICH HE HAD ALSO SEEN, WOULD HAVE REPERCUSSIONS IN COLOMBIA. RETURNING TO THE NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ARTICLE, VIGNES NOTED THAT MANY HERE IN ARGENTINA WOULD INTERPRET THE MAILLIARD STATEMENT AS AN UNFRIENDLY ACT AGAINST ARGENTINA ON THE PART OF THE U.S. INDEED, HE SAID, IF THE CONFERENCE TIMING WERE TO CHANGE, MANY WOULD ASSUME THAT THIS WAS ONE OF THE PURPOSES SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD FOR COMING IN FEBRUARY, A CONCLUSION WHICH WOULD, HE BELIEVED, REFLECT UNFAIRLY AND NEGATIVELY ON THE SECRETARY. I ASSURED THE FORMIN THAT AT NO TIME HAD SECRETARY KISSINGER IN ANY WAY INDICATED TO ME THAT BUENOS AIRES SHOULD NOT BE THE SITE OF THE MFM. INDEED, I SAID, MOST OF MY RECENT COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE DEPARTMENT HAD BEEN CONCERNED WITH MATTERS RELATING TO FEBRUARY AND MARCH VISITS.

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8. I AGAIN ASSURED THE FORMIN THAT I WOULD DO EVERYTHING I POSSIBLY COULD TO GET THE MATTER RESOLVED IMMEDIATELY.

9. VIGNES THEN TURNED TO THE SUBJECT OF THE TRADE ACT SAYING WE SHOULD MAKE NO MISTAKE, THE TRADE ACT WAS A SERIOUS AND DIVISIVE NEW ISSUE THAT HAD BEEN INJECTED INTO INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS, ONE WHICH WOULD REQUIRE MUCH SKILL TO OVERCOME. AMB. QUIJANO THEN SAID THAT PERHAPS AT THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN APRIL WHERE THE TRADE ACT WOULD BE DISCUSSED, THE POSITIONS OF ALL SIDES WOULD BECOME CLEAR AND WE COULD BEGIN TO GO FORWARD FROM THERE.

10. I ASKED VIGNES IF IN HIS POLLING OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OVER THE WEEKEND ANY CONSENSUS HAD EMERGED ON THE TIMING OF THE MFM. HE REPLIED THAT HE HAD NOT YET POLLED ALL OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS AND IT WOULD BE PREMATURE TO CONSIDER TIMING THIS AFTERNOON, BUT SAID HE WOULD HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL US BY THE 27TH OR 28TH.

11. I ASKED IF THE CUBAN ISSUE WAS BEING DISCUSSED IN THIS PHONE POLL AND HE REPLIED THAT THE TRADE ACT HAD DISPLACED THE CUBAN ISSUE AS THE NUMBER ONE PROBLEM ISSUE IN INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS.

12. SINCE OUR CONVERSATION AT FOREIGN OFFICE, AMB. ORFILA HAS CALLED AND TOLD ME OF HIS CONVERSATION WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS. ORFILA URGED ME IN BEHALF OF ROGERS TO ISSUE PUBLIC STATEMENT TO REFUTE MAILLIARD'S COMMENT IN BOGOTA. ON A DELICATE MATTER SUCH AS THIS, I WOULD HAVE TO HAVE INSTRUCTIONS FROM DEPARTMENT. ALSO, A CALL FROM BOWDLER EMPHASIZED THE CONFUSION CAUSED BY MAILLIARD'S STATEMENT. WHETHER OR NOT A SUNDAY RETRACTION WILL HANDLE PROBLEM WILL ONLY BE DETERMINED BY NEWS EVENTS. EMBASSY BA HOPES NOON BRIEFING ON JAN. 27 BY DEPARTMENT WILL ALSO HELP KNOCK DOWN ONCE AND FOR ALL MAILLIARD'S STATEMENT BOGOTA. I WILL AWAIT CABLED INSTRUCTION FOR THE ROLE I AM TO PLAY HERE. HILL

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## Message Attributes

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